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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000635

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SUBJECT: CZECHS ON JUNE 12 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 91167

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 607
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 610

Classified By: Acting Political-Economic Counselor
Karen C. Reider for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. At the June 12 GAERC, the Czechs expect the focus to be on Cuba, the Middle East, and the Balkans. On Cuba, the GAERC conclusions are expected to contain strong language on Cuba (already negotiated by the Czechs and the Spanish) denouncing the human rights conditions in Cuba and obligating the EU to elaborate a new strategy to help the Cubans achieve a democratic transition. The Director of the Czech MFA's CFSP Department called this "midterm strategy" a "success." On Palestinian aid, the Czechs support the U.S. position and continue to remind EU partners that the message to Hamas must focus on the three principles (the need to recognize Israel, renounce violence, and honor previous commitments). Kaiser also predicted that the foreign ministers will discuss EU support for Iraq following the formation of the new Iraqi government. On the Balkans, the Czechs predict that a settlement on Kosovo will need to be politically imposed. Nevertheless, Czechs continue to support EU enlargement and urge the EU to honor its commitment to provide the EU perspective to Serbia and others in the region. Finally, Kaiser predicted that while Czech foreign policy generally will not change following the recent parliamentary election, there could be one exception: policy in relation to internal EU politics. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Poloff met June 9 with Petr Kaiser, Director of the Czech MFA's CFSP Department, to deliver reftel talking points, and to discuss June 12 GAERC. The discussion focused on Cuba, the Middle East, and the Balkans.

Cuba

[1](#)3. (C) The Czechs feel they have achieved success on their efforts to nudge the EU common policy on Cuba closer to the Czech position. Although it is not yet official, Kaiser said the Czechs and the Spanish have agreed on strong language for the GAERC Conclusions. This language will denounce the human rights conditions in Cuba and obligate the EU to elaborate a new strategy to help the Cubans achieve a democratic transition. Kaiser said the Spanish were persuaded to adopt this common language based on the argument that the EU condemned Belarus Dictator Lukashenko, yet the situation in Cuba is far worse. Strong supporters of this "midterm strategy," which Kaiser said will require the EU to engage on Cuba at a "more serious level," included the UK, Poland,

Slovakia and the Netherlands.

¶4. (C) Kaiser said FM Cyril Svoboda plans to deliver a strong speech on Cuba at the June 12 GAERC. FM Svoboda, in what may be one of his last acts as Foreign Minister, will call on all EU foreign ministers to engage regularly on Cuba, and will urge the EU to include Cuba on the agenda for the U.S.-EU Summit.

Middle East

¶5. (C) On Palestinian assistance, the Czechs support the U.S. position that aid should be administered quickly, and be limited in scope and duration. Further, the international community should endorse the aid mechanism. However, the Czechs think the details of the mechanism are less important than the political message urging the Hamas government to accept the three principles (recognizing Israel, renouncing violence, and honoring previous agreements).

¶6. (C) On Iraq, the Czechs will urge the EU to make a strong commitment to Iraq now that the Iraqi government has been formed. Kaiser said the foreign ministers will discuss this issue at the June 12 GAERC.

Balkans

¶7. (C) When asked about the prospects of EU accession for Balkan states, Kaiser noted growing uneasiness within the EU on the issue of enlargement. The code word for this uneasiness is "absorption capacity." He predicted that

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certain countries already in the queue, such as Bulgaria and Croatia, would be admitted. But many EU member states are currently "allergic" to the prospect of accepting countries like Macedonia, Ukraine, or Turkey. In Kaiser's view, meaningful discussion on further enlargement for the Balkan states is therefore "blocked." The Czechs support further enlargement and will urge the EU to consider each country individually, not as a package. (However, Kaiser noted that it would be difficult to admit all but one Balkans country.) Further, the EU should continue to discuss future membership in the EU with Serbia and other countries in the region, and undertake initiatives to keep the positive momentum (such as implementing visa policies that encourage Balkans citizens to visit EU countries.) At the same time, the EU should avoid making false promises.

¶8. (C) On Kosovo, Kaiser said there is a growing conviction within the EU that a negotiated settlement on Kosovo is unachievable. He believes, and others agree, that the Serbs would prefer an imposed solution (so long as they agree to the basic terms) because the current Serbian leadership seeks to avoid the stigma of agreeing to the independence of Kosovo. They would rather blame the "arrogant west" for imposing a resolution on Serbia. The EU is beginning to recognize the importance of achieving a result that allows the current Serbian leadership to save face, and prevents further humiliation of the Serbian people.

Czech Foreign Relations

¶9. (C) Kaiser predicted that Czech foreign policy will not change following the June 2-3 Czech parliamentary elections (reftels B and C). The Czechs will continue to support strong transatlantic relations and focus on human rights (he noted broad agreement among ODS, CSSD, and other parties on the Czech approach to Cuba and Belarus). However, Kaiser said one possible exception could be the Czech approach to EU internal

matters (e.g., support for further EU expansion or the transfer of powers to Brussels), which could change depending on the composition and influence of the new coalition government. (Note: The June 2-3 election resulted in a stalemate, where none of the parties received enough votes to form a government on its own and where the left and the right wing prospective coalitions each have exactly 100 seats in a 200-seat Chamber of Deputies. One faction within the Civic Democrat Party (ODS), which received the largest number of votes in the June 2-3 elections, is the euroskeptic group led by President Vaclav Klaus. Kaiser is alluding to the possible influence of this ODS faction on Czech EU policy. However, it is unclear whether ODS will be able to form a coalition government that can pass a Parliamentary vote of confidence, and doubly unclear that if they do, how much influence the Klaus-faction of ODS will ultimately have. End note.)

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